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Changing Contexts

Feelings of gender originate from many other sources besides family relationships and experiences of body and sexuality, which will be the focus in my analysis in this book. Experiences stemming from educational institutions, peer culture and peer relations, and popular culture and media are all important, in addition to the general impact of demographic, economic, political and cultural trends. The different sources cannot be strictly empirically separated. As David Morgan puts it: 'family life is never simply family life … it is always continuous with other areas of existence' (Morgan 1999: 13). Such areas of existence will also float into my analysis when they appear through the lens I direct towards the family and bodily experiences. By describing them separately at first, they may be easier to discover when they make their presence felt in the lived lives of the three generations. Some of the societal conditions I highlight will be particular to Scandinavia or Norway; others will be conditions that are similar in other Western countries. However, the focus will be on the Scandinavian/Norwegian context with an emphasis on the twentieth century.

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Family Forms: Equality, Difference and Individual Rights

Processes of modernisation have changed gender relations in all European countries, but the north-western part of Europe had an historical advantage due to a specific pre-industrial family and household formation that gave married women a relatively strong position. The north-western European marriage pattern was characterised by a high marriage age for both men and women, marriage by choice and independent housing for the married couple and their children (Sandvik 1999, also based on the British historian John Hajnal's studies). In this family form, the married couple and the nuclear family constituted the centre, in contrast to the patriarchal control in extended households that were dominant in other agrarian societies. A consequence of the high marriage age and the many who remained single was that many young people, including young women, would work in other households to earn their living before marriage. This gave access to a period of youth outside the direct control of their parents. Hence, the life conditions for young women and men were not so different, and when they married, they had both become adults and brought property and productive resources into the family (Solheim 2012). However, it is also important to note that the types of work that were seen as specifically feminine had lower status than the masculine ones. Married woman did not have any legal capacity (in Norway not until 1888); it was the husband who legally represented the household and who had the right both to economic disposition of the joint property and to keep discipline in his family. The north-western European family model was definitely not an egalitarian one, it was based on both gender differentiation and gender hierarchy, but married woman had economic responsibility and could, depending on the circumstances, have a strong position and authority in the household.

The development of industrial capitalism during the nineteenth century led to a change in the bourgeois family that split private and public domains and redefined the family as a sphere of intimacy instead of production (Hagemann 1999). This 'modern gender revolution' (Solheim 2012: 45) laid the foundation for the two-sphere model implying radical sex differences with regard to both tasks and assumed personal traits and

capacities. It represented a gradual change from economic partnership to a complementary gender order, where women lost influence regarding the family's property. However, the old family model maintained a strong position in Norway, which in the nineteenth century only had a very limited and not very wealthy upper class. In spite of the gradual restructuring of the economy during the nineteenth century, the vast majority of people still lived off farming, fishing and forestry, and they continued to do so into the twentieth century. In this rural population—from where many of our informants in the oldest generation came—the traditional family model based on economic cooperation between the spouses continued without interruption (Melby 1999; Crompton et al. 2007). Small-scale farming was often combined with fishing and forestry, which meant that the men had to leave for longer or shorter periods. This also kept up the necessity and importance of women's work and their co-responsibility for the family. Quite a substantial number of women were directly involved in economic activities by the end of the nineteenth century, especially those in the working classes, but also to an increasing extent in the growing middle classes where unmarried daughters often had to seek paid work, for instance, as teachers. Due to the many widowed women and huge emigration mainly of men to the USA before and after 1900, there were a high number of unmarried women. These women either stayed in their families helping out or worked to earn their own living.[1] In addition, many married women took part in the enterprises of their husbands in addition to taking care of the home. In most bourgeois families it was also necessary that the wives took responsibility for the household, although they were assisted by domestic servants. Generally, then, Norwegian women continued to work in or outside of the family, including after the bourgeois gender revolution (Hagemann 1999).

Norway's route to modernisation has some special traits. The country was part of Denmark until the end of the Napoleonic Wars and was then in a union with Sweden until 1905. This delayed industrialisation compared to Denmark and Sweden. Norway did not become a modern

[1] In 1900 20 per cent of men and 30 per cent of women between 30 and 49 years of age were unmarried or widowed (Hagemann 1999).

industrial society until after independence in 1905. By 1945 half of the population lived in the cities, whereas a third still worked in agriculture and fishing. At the same time it is also the case that Norway ratified its first constitution in 1814, which was one of the most radical, liberal and democratic in Europe at that time. Among other things, it established freedom of the press, the separation of legislative, juridical and executive power, and abolished the nobility in the country. During the nineteenth century's union with Sweden, which mainly concerned foreign policy and defence, Norway gradually developed as a nation state. This meant that the emergence of the Norwegian state apparatus and the process of modernisation took place under fairly democratic conditions, at a time where most of the population could read and write, and under the impact of a blooming economy during most of the nineteenth century. In addition to a fairly homogenous population in terms of religion and ethnicity where a majority were independent farmers and fishers, and the lack of both royal power, nobility and a large or rich bourgeoisie, these traits laid a solid foundation for an egalitarian culture. This is also seen in the influential role of popular and social movements, agrarian enlightenment and an increase in the level of general education in the second half of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries (Melby et al. 2008: 5). As a result, egalitarian values, self-determination and emphasis on social inclusion rather than differentiation along the boundaries of public and private became part of the Norwegian national culture. The same traits are, with minor differences, seen in all the other Nordic countries. As the Nordic historians Melby, Ravn and Wetterberg describe it: 'The Nordic model is distinguished by individualism combined with state responsibility for the common welfare through social reform and intervention … a political culture in which it was a state responsibility to reform society, relying on the active participation of the citizens' (Melby et al. 2008: 5).

The relatively egalitarian character of the Nordic societies and family structure, and the interaction between the state and civil society, may explain why the Nordic countries became engaged in policies of gender equality earlier than other European countries:[2] 'The democratic

[2] Women gained the right to vote in 1906 in Finland, in 1913 in Norway, in 1915 in Denmark and Iceland, and in 1919 in Sweden.

integration of women in civil society was a hallmark of the Nordic political culture, as much as women's agency is one among several factors that explain this culture' (Melby et al. 2008: 5). New marriage laws were adopted in all the Nordic countries during the first decades of the new century. Unlike legislation in the rest of Europe at this time, these laws recognised married women as individuals in their own right by granting them the right to take up gainful work without the consent of their husbands and by establishing economic equality in marriage. Husband and wife were made jointly responsible for family provision and were also established as independent, formally equal owners of their respective property. Melby et al. (2008: 8) argue that this could actually be seen as an early 'modified dual breadwinner model'. However, it was also a model based on unquestioned ideas of gender differentiation, as women's unpaid work in the family was equated in principle with men's maintenance by money. In this way the law bridged the economic partnership of the old family model and the new male earner/female carer family, based on the bourgeois family model. Tax legislation clearly encouraged the latter model and continued to do so in Norway until 1959. However, one might say that the emphasis was more on the principle of gender differentiation than on a belief in gender difference (Melby et al. 2008: 1). What united the old and new family models was the focus on family functions more than on gender identities or naturalised gender norms. This again contributed to tension with the principle of equal rights.

The economic decline in the 1920s and 1930s and the difficult conditions in the labour market that followed gave an advantage to the principle of gender differentiation. The numbers of housewives increased in the inter-war period. The farmer women became fewer, more working-class women could afford to quit their job and middle-class women lost their domestic servants. In addition, women married at a younger age than before and had fewer children.[3] Since there was still a high number

[3] Between 1900 and 1930, statistics show that 40 per cent of married women in Norway were registered as housewives. After 1930 it increased rapidly and in 1950 it was 53 per cent. The year 1960 saw this figure peak before it started to decrease. These numbers also include farmer women and women who worked in family enterprises. Only 4–5 per cent of the married women were registered as having paid work in 1900 and in 1950. However, the statistics did not include part-time work before 1920 (Melby 1999: 234, 270). Occasional small and informal jobs, which many women took to improve the family economy, are not registered either.

of unmarried women until the 1930s, there were also many women in paid work. But the absolute majority of married women were housewives and could now spend more time on housework, which in this period was professionalised through research and information campaigns (Melby 1999; Hagemann 2010). During the Second World War, Norway was occupied for five years by Germany. This meant that there was no general draft in those years and thus no need for women to step in for the men in factories and other workplaces as was the case in many other countries. The male earner/female carer family policy was continued in the first decades after the war where the Scandinavian countries saw almost two decades of social democratic majority governments. Due to the economic boom and the need for women's labour outside the family, family policy in the late 1950s became engaged with the idea of 'women's two roles' as mothers and workers, but from the 1960s this changed into an equality-oriented discourse about women's right to 'freedom of choice' (Melby et al. 2008: 11). Thus, regarding the old tension between gender differentiation and individual rights, the latter now gained ground. Melby argues that the historically short period of the 'housewife era' mainly functioned as a makeshift to curb the increasing conflict between the old values of collective moral and work and the new values of individualism, which by itself triggered further modernisation and individualisation—including undermining the gender order itself (Melby 1999: 230).

These features of the Nordic countries have fostered a specific blend of equality norms and individually based rights in contrast to family rights that have had a stronger position in other welfare states in Europe. The longstanding aim has been to make every individual, including married women, economically independent, something that has contributed to weaken both patriarchal and parental authority. The orientation towards egalitarianism and individual rights is seen with regard to children as well. Norms of child-centred upbringing and a view of the child as a self-contained individual came earlier in Scandinavia than anywhere else (Therborn 1993). Corporal physical punishment, for instance, was banned in Norwegian schools in 1936 and in the family in 1972, and state-provided sex education was introduced early (de Coninck-Smith 2003). The Nordic countries were also the first to adopt individual legal

rights for children (Therborn 1993; de Coninck-Smith 2003).[4] Generally speaking, Scandinavian children enjoyed a relatively anti-authoritarian upbringing from the early 1950s, a free and relatively child-centred school system and less gender-stereotyped discourses than was the case in other European countries and the USA (see, for instance, Breines 1992; Jamieson 1998; Lawler 2000; Brannen et al. 2004).

Improved Living Standards, Social Security, Class and Education

As sons and daughters of workers, small farmers and fishers, often with many siblings in cramped quarters, almost all of our informants in the oldest generation described a childhood with material standards very far from what their grandchildren had come to consider an ordinary standard of living. They emphasised that they did not starve, but in their detailed memories—kept through more than half a century—of what they ate at the different meals of the day and often also the exact prices for everyday groceries, we can see a reflection of life circumstances where food and clothing and the money to buy them were not taken for granted. For this generation of working-class and rural children, sufficient food and clothing and parents striving to provide this equalled a good childhood. Mothers who became widows had to manage both household and work for money outside, as there was no social security at that point other than the socially degrading poor relief fund. Class differences were prominent, both economically and culturally. However, belonging to the middle class did not necessarily entail much economic security either. In cases where the father died early, the mother often had to take unskilled paid work out of pure necessity.

The twentieth century saw a rapid increase in living standards. During the first decades of the new century in Norway, the threat of mass poverty was replaced by a basic social security (Kjeldstadli 1994: 96). The

[4] In Norway children born out of wedlock gained the right to inherit from the father and carry his name from 1915. The state also supplied economic support if the father of the child did not pay (Melby et al. 2008: 10).

improved living conditions led to better public health. The height and weight of children went up, and class differences in children and young people's physical growth and development gradually disappeared. Yet, income differences between the social classes increased until the Second World War. Norway was neutral during the First World War and was occupied during the Second World War.

Compared to what children in many other countries experienced, relatively few Scandinavian children had absent fathers because of the wars or saw them injured or killed.[5] The deep sense of loss and separation found in other countries in this generation of children (Chodorow 2000; Brannen 2015) is not present in the narratives of those of our informants who grew up during the war. More of the men than the women in our study took part in the resistance movement or remember dramatic episodes. The women mention their fear of German soldiers and especially the Gestapo, that things were closed down or taken over by the Nazis, that it was a boring time to be young and that there was a severe lack of food and clothing. During the German occupation, the development of the new welfare state that had started in the mid-1930s came to a halt. After the war all social institutions had to be rebuilt and many commodities were rationed into the 1950s.

As in the rest of Europe, there was a rapid increase in living standards from the 1950s, which was in the beginning still within norms of modesty and savings in daily life. From 1950 to 1970, private consumption tripled and differences in income among various groups of people were greatly reduced (Lange 1998). The informants in the middle generation do not talk about the question of whether they had enough food when they describe the living conditions of their childhood, but remember the fashionable clothes they yearned for that could only be granted on special occasions like birthdays or Christmas. Tight economy is, however, not remembered as a permanent state. In this generation, everybody, except children of single or divorced mothers, recalls how much better off their family became during the 1960s and they have vivid recollections of how

[5] About 0.3 per cent of the Norwegian population lost their lives due to the Second World War. (www.arkivverket.no/arkivverket). This includes 738 of the 772 Norwegian Jews (adults and children) who were deported—with the assistance of the Norwegian state administration—to German extermination camps during the war. Only 34 returned alive.

new consumer goods continuously arrived in the family: electric cookers, washing machines, refrigerators, transistor radios, tape-recorders, TVs and finally even a car for dad! The stories are filled with details about when their families got these commodities compared with other families, but the later they are born, the less they talk about this. It had become the normal state of affairs.

Not only did private consumption go up as the middle generation came of age, but so too did state-provided public services like health care, education and care services for children, the ill, the disabled and the elderly. The Nordic welfare states were gradually developed from the mid-1930s. In Norway the first laws about unemployment benefits, paid sick leave and retirement benefits were introduced in the 1930s, in addition to work hour regulation, paid holiday and laws about worker protection. After the war, in the 1940s, came the child benefit for all families, the educational loan fund for students and cheap housing loans to buy apartments in the new suburbs; in the 1950s full retirement schemes for all; and in the 1960s support for single mothers and disability benefits. The whole system of national security was fully established by 1970. Along with a progressive taxation system, this led to less poverty and social inequality in the Nordic societies than in other countries (Korpi 2000). This is also some of the background for class journeys of this period being experienced as less dramatic than in countries with larger class and income differences. The period from 1935 to 1970 has been described as a period dominated by social consensus in Norway, as a period of integration and gathering around common goals (Lange 1998). As one of our informants, born in 1947, said: '*it was a period of economic boom, nobody was unemployed. It was just available, and everything just progressed*'.

The new laws of social security and work security reshaped the frames for the oldest generation's lives as adults, but it was the expanding educational system that became decisive for their children. Whereas many in the older generation had to quit school early or give up the further education they wanted for economic reasons or due to family obligations, access to schools became easier for the middle generation. Before 1936, children only had to attend school when they were between seven and 12 years of age (although most stayed until their confirmation at 14), and children from rural areas only attended school every second day. From

1936, seven years of ordinary school became mandatory and in 1969 this was extended to nine years. High schools were built in rural areas too, and the state provided educational loans in combination with free access to universities and colleges with the aim of making it economically possible for students from poor families to also enter higher education. There was a strong political incentive for encouraging young people to get higher education, regardless of class and gender, as education was seen as the main tool to increase equality and justice and reduce class differences in the population. The number who graduated from high school in Norway increased from three per cent of the age cohort in 1930 to ten per cent in 1960 and 36 per cent in 1990 (academic track). Girls surpassed boys in frequency of high school graduation in 1975, and during the 1980s they also became the majority in higher education (Statistics Norway http://www.ssb.no/a/english/histstat/). Social reproduction through education was somewhat reduced, but did not disappear. New intersections between gender and class were established: taking the educational track to social mobility became more common and successful for working-class girls than for working-class boys in the post-war generations. Before the 1960s, marriage was the most prevalent path to social mobility for all women, but with the expansion of the educational system and with girls on average achieving better in school than boys, this changed. The opportunities for girls in the educational system may partly be explained by the system's degree of formalisation: if you do well on one level, you are invited to enter the next (Frønes 2001). This has not least been the case in the Nordic countries, where there have been few private schools or elite schools, and where higher education has been, and still is, free.

The encouragement of girls' education also led to a new intersection between gender and generation in the post-war years: the Norwegian economist Kari Skrede (1999) writes that this period had one policy for the daughters and another for the mothers. The policy for the mothers was based firmly on the gendered provider/carer family model, while the policy for the daughters had as its goal the breaking down of all kinds of class and gender barriers through the system of education. This 'policy for the daughters' is also seen in the early reduction of the gender gap in higher education in the Nordic countries. Compared to other European

countries, the gender gaps in education among those born in the 1940 are small (Korpi 2000: 137).

The youngest generation was born at a time when the national security system had just been fully established. Continuing education after compulsory school has over the three generations changed from being a privilege of the few to being a matter of course and, finally, a necessity for young people who want to create a competitive CV. The youngest generation was born in the year when Norway voted against membership in the EU (1972), but their childhood and youth still coincided with increasing internationalisation, mediatisation and new communication technologies. However, when we interviewed them in 1991, the Internet and the GSM net for mobile phones had not yet been launched.

The youngest generation grew up with self-evident affluence. Even though there were different economic standards in different families, nobody mentions not getting the clothes they want because of a lack of money. However, some did have parents who were critical towards brand-label clothing. For this generation as young persons, class differences seem to be perceived mainly as incidental differences in taste of music, clothes and lifestyle. Instead of talking about poor people, this generation talks about 'losers'. One middle-class informant from our sample described girls coming from the eastern suburbs of Oslo not as less privileged than herself, but as '*very common, a lot of make-up, quit school after junior high*'. But in the period when this generation came of age, income differences actually started to increase again in Norway. Trends of deregulation put pressure on the organisation of welfare state provisions, and the labour market became less stable and predictable. A recession took place in the late 1970s and marked the end of the stable political climate led by the social democratic party. Around the time we did our interviews in 1991, unemployment was relatively high, especially among young people.[6]

Norway found oil in 1969 and the state-owned oil industry made the country into one of the world's richest during the following decades. This

[6] In 1992 there was about six per cent unemployment in total and about 13 per cent for 15–24-year-olds (Statistics Norway). This led to an expansion of higher education, which encouraged more people in our youngest generation to choose this option.

contributed to reducing the insecurity and inequality-promoting effects of the era of deregulation and economic crises, but not at the same pace as the growing social differences. Increasing competition in getting into the higher education, jobs, promotions and individualised salaries made life more stressful for young people compared with the previous decades. But in spite of increasing deregulations, privatisation and the population becoming more heterogeneous due to increased migration, so far the national security system has not been seriously affected (Korpi 2000; Ellingsæter and Widerberg 2012).

Gender Equality: Policy and Practice

In 1979 the law of gender equality was ratified in Norway. In the following two decades gender equality policies had high public priority. The increasing numbers of working mothers gave rise to new social challenges that needed a political solution. In addition, women's low degree of participation in political life, their absence from high professional and managerial positions, and problems of equal pay and discrimination became increasingly visible and were perceived as incompatible with the new norms of gender equality that were supposed to prevail in all spheres of society. An important cultural and political push in the struggle for gender equality came from the Women's Movement, which mobilised in Norway from the early 1970s as in the rest of the Western world, but also continued on from older and less radical women's organisations. The Norwegian social scientist Helga Hernes has described the process as a result of 'state feminism', a combination of 'feminism from below' (the movements and organisations in civil society) and 'feminism from above' (the legislation facilitated by feminist bureaucrats and politicians) (Hernes 1987). What especially came to distinguish the Nordic 'caring state' from other Western countries was that care for children, disabled people and the elderly from early on was seen as a public responsibility and was given a universal form (Leira 2012). From the 1980s, women's economic chances were supported by the implementation of gender quotas and other anti-discrimination legislation with regard to education and work, and the expansion of parental leaves and public daycare

with regard to families. From the 1990s onwards, the political model of the universal breadwinner was extended to the idea of the universal carer (Fraser 1997). Men's rights as fathers received increasing attention (Korsvik 2011), and a special and mandatory father's quota of the parental leave was implemented in 1993.[7] This has created a unique situation for Norwegian fathers when it comes to care, which today they only share with fathers in Sweden, Iceland and Germany. Quotas for men were also introduced in education and jobs related to care for and teaching of children. All this indicates that the Nordic gender equality model not only led to 'defamilisation' with its emphasis on women's economic independence, but also entails elements of 'refamilisation' through generous systems of parental leave for both parents, paid absence from work to take care of sick children, and a special cash-for-care allowance introduced in 1998[8] (Ellingsæter and Leira 2006; Ellingsæter 2012).

Norway represents an interesting case in the Nordic context because it demonstrates more clearly than the other countries the tension between gender differentiation and gender equality that goes back to the beginning of the twentieth century. This can partly be explained by conflicts between different class fractions of women (Sainsbury 2001) and

[7] The quota earmarked four weeks of the by then 42-week-long parental leave for the father. Six weeks (plus three weeks before birth) were earmarked the mother, so 29 weeks were left to be decided by the parents themselves. The father quota was expanded after 1993, almost in parallel with the expansion of the total parental leave. In 2011 the father quota was 12 weeks (and the total parental leave 47 weeks). In 2013 the social democratic government decided to expand it to 14 weeks, but the following year a new right-wing government reduced it to 10 weeks. Before the father quota was introduced in 1993, very few fathers took out any of the joint parental leave. After it was introduced, a very large majority of fathers took out their quota, but only a few took out more than their earmarked weeks. It is the fathers with the highest and the lowest income who take the shortest leave (Ellingsæter 2012).

[8] This reform gave a cash-for-care allowance for families with children under the age of three who did not attend publicly subsidised daycare, which was by then still in demand. It was introduced by a centre-right government, headed by the Christian Democratic Party, and the declared aim was to give families the choice of deciding the best care for their children and to contribute to more equal state remittances for childcare regardless of the chosen form of care. The proposal was held in strictly gender-neutral terms, but the effect of the reform was gendered since almost no fathers took out the allowance. The number of women in paid work was not reduced by the cash-for-care reform (the allowance was small), but the increase stopped for a few years until more public daycare had become available. Working-class and immigrant families are overrepresented among those who use the cash-for-care benefit today. But as more of the non-immigrant mothers than the immigrant mothers combine the allowance with paid work, the reform has to an increasing degree been seen as a problem for the integration of immigrant women and their children (Ellingsæter 2012).

partly by the stronger hold of religion in some regions of Norway and its continuing influence in politics (Korpi 2000; Melby et al. 2008). In 1960 Norway was among the countries in the Western world with the lowest rates of women in paid work, and women's entry into the labour market came a decade later than in the other Nordic countries. The development of daycare also came very slowly, and even today the number of Norwegian women working part-time is higher than in the other Nordic countries (Kitterød and Rønsen 2012). On the basis of these observations, researchers have described Norway as a more family-oriented and maternalist culture than the other Nordic countries (Knudsen and Wærness 2001; Sainsbury 2001; Borchorst 2008). It is probably more accurate to say that political disagreements have contributed to a dualistic family model (Ellingsæter 2012). However, the Norwegian tension between different family models, in combination with the cross-political agreement to prioritise care, may also be seen as having facilitated the track towards a universal caregiver model which may potentially transgress the equality/difference dilemma (Fraser 1997). The long parental leave, the father quota and other generous schemes to improve the care for children can be seen as a recognition of the importance of parental care, including the fact that it does not have to be gender-differentiated.

The middle generation in our sample became parents in around 1970, so when the Women's Movement and the other radical movements of the 1970s took off, they were already established with families of their own. They are just ahead of what has been called a change of gear in family formation in the mid-1970s where the practice of cohabitation increased and the age for marriage and the birth of the first child went up (Noack and Hovde 2012; Pedersen 2012). Some of the women in our sample participated in marches on March 8 and demonstrations in favour of free abortion, and read the journals from the Women's Movement, and some of the men remember that their wives became radicalised. The impact of the Women's Movement is also seen as a frame of reference in the interviews when our informants talk about quarrels of housework and of divorces.

The 1970s was the decade where Norwegian women entered the labour market in large numbers, and during the 1980s this also came to include

women with young children.[9] During the childhood of our youngest generation—from 1972 to 1990—the percentage of married or cohabiting women with children under 15 years of age in paid work increased from 43 per cent to 77 per cent[10] (Kitterød and Rønsen 2012: 163). However, what also characterised this period was that the development of daycare was far from following the number of working mothers (Leira 2002). Thus, the women of our middle generation belong to the specific cohorts of young mothers who took up paid work before the state provisions to cater to this was developed: in 1970 the maternity leave was 12 weeks and the daycare coverage was three per cent.[11] In the same period (1970–1990) women on average reduced the time they spent on care and housework considerably more than men increased their contribution. The father's participation in housework depends on how many hours the mother works and how high her income is (Kjeldstad and Lappegård 2010; Brannen 2015).[12] Private help in the house has until recently been

[9] In the UK mothers with small children entered the labour market a decade later, in the 1990s. In 2000 full-time employment among women with children in the UK was still much lower than in the Scandinavian countries (Fagani 2007; Brannen et al. 2004). Nordic women have on average the highest labour force participation in Europe and also when part-time is taken into consideration (den Dulk and Doorne-Huiskes 2007).

[10] During this period, however, half of the women worked part-time, and the differentiation between part-time/full-time followed levels of education: the longer the education, the more full-time work (Skrede 1986; Kitterød and Rønsen 2012). In 2010 the number of mothers in paid work had increased to 87 per cent. The numbers also include women on parental leave, and as the leave was considerably prolonged in the same period of time (from 12 weeks in 1970 to 28 weeks in 1990, and to 46 weeks in 2010), the numbers are not directly comparable (Kitterød and Rønsen 2012; Ellingsæter 2012).

[11] In 1990 the daycare coverage had increased to 35 per cent, which was still far behind the number of working mothers with young children. In particular, the coverage for children under three years was a problem until the beginning of the 2000s. The coverage in Oslo was much higher than the average in the entire country (Myhre 1994). There was also a social differentiation as middle-class children more often attended public daycare than children from working-class families (Ellingsæter 2012). Only in 2009 did public daycare become a right for children from the age of 12 months. The public daycare coverage in the Nordic countries is much higher and much cheaper than in most other European countries. For instance, in 2005, childcare costs represented 12 per cent of a family's net income in Norway and 27 per cent in the UK (den Dulk and Doorne-Huiskes 2007).

[12] In 1971 (the year our youngest generation was born) women spent 29 hours a week on average on housework, while men spent four hours (maintenance work, care work and shopping not included). In 1990 (the time we conducted our interviews) for number of hours for women had reduced to 16, while for men it increased to five hours. In 2010 (when we did the last interviews with the youngest generation) for number of hours for women had reduced to 12 hours, while for men it increased to seven hours. In the same timeframe, men doubled the time spent on care,

very rare in Norway outside of high-status families and was at the time when we did our interviews associated more with household income than with employment of the woman in the family (Kitterød 2009).

It has been argued that the Nordic gender equality policies have been more attuned to the life form of families where both parents have full-time and attractive jobs and where the women can benefit from schemes to promote women's careers in work and politics. Support of gender equality both in attitude and practice are related to education and job status, especially for women (Crompton et al. 2007; Kjeldstad and Lappegård 2010). This tendency is also reflected in the middle generation in our sample, where most of the middle-class women had full-time jobs, or close to full-time, and most had stayed home only during periods of parental leave, whereas some of the working-class women worked part-time and had stayed at home for some years when their children were small. Working-class women and women from certain ethnic groups tend to be sceptical of middle-class women's career orientation and prefer to spend more time with their family, and some may also prefer more distinct gender roles in the home and regarding childcare. However, the majority of them support the idea of gender equality and especially political measures for equal pay and statutory rights against sexualised violence (Walby 1997; Skilbrei 2005; Melby et al. 2008; Andersen and Aarseth 2012). Discrepancies between attitudes to gender equality and the practised gender equality, especially with regard to housework, are also within all social groups, but in different forms. Generally, for women practice is less equal than their attitudes to gender equality, whereas for men it is the other way round (Kjeldstad and Lappegård 2010). It is also the case for all groups that structural forces may increase the dissonance between attitudes and practices: in working-class and immigrant families, who in general are more in favour of a traditional division of work, economic and practical conditions often make their actual practices more gender-equal. In middle-class families, especially those where the husband has a high salary, structural conditions make it possible for the women to

whereas the hours were the same for women (Kitterød and Rønsen 2012). Still, Nordic families share the domestic work more equally than is the case in other European countries (den Dulk and Doorne-Huiskes 2007).

work less. Thus, somewhat paradoxically, a positive attitude to gender equality may still be drawn towards a more gender-traditional practice. A contributing factor here is also the increasing demand of long work hours in high-status professional jobs, especially in the private sector (Andersen and Aarseth 2012; Kavli 2012; Brannen 2015). This picture is reflected by the fact that the men who use the father quota the least are those with either very high or very low incomes (Ellingsæter 2012).

Gender equality as a norm and value has a high degree of support across the Norwegian population. Today 70 per cent of the Norwegian population has a positive attitude to the family model where both breadwinning and domestic work are shared between the spouses (NOU 15 2012). However, there is also a rising critique of the pressured lives of families with small children and double careers, and younger people have voiced their opinions about more freedom of choice and individual solutions (Melby et al. 2008; Andersen and Aarseth 2012). Still, the political discussions of gender equality are mainly limited to questions like 'how far' gender equality should go, to what degree it should also focus on men's situations or include other dimensions of discrimination, and to what degree gender equality in the family and in private enterprises should be a private choice or a target of state intervention. Arguments for a return to the old gender contract with distinct roles for women and men or even to the housewife model of the 1950s are rarely seen outside the contexts of extreme political or religious groups.[13]

Youth, Gender and Modernity

A last contextual framing important to the study is the way the period of youth and sexual norms changed during the twentieth century. Especially in the post-war years the educational policy encouraged individuality in girls from early on, both in the family and in school, and the earlier pro-

[13] In recent years, the changing gender contract has provoked some very negative and even violent reactions in Europe and the USA among people belonging to the extreme political right or religious groups who see modernisation as a threat to 'God-given' values. One of the worst incidents took place in Norway in 2011, where a right-wing terrorist killed 69 people and legitimised it as a war against modern gender relations *and* Muslim immigration.

vision of sex education in schools may also have been significant. The social processes that had an impact on the family in the twentieth century had far-reaching effects on what it meant to be a young person: individualisation, increasing affluence, extended education, social and geographical mobility and increased consumption. Modernisation processes gradually led to a demarcation of youth as a separate life phase all over the Western world, and the need for what Erik H. Erikson has coined a psychosocial moratorium (Erikson 1968: 156). Increased reflexivity, choice and reorientation become urgent issues when new generations cannot simply take over their parents' way of life, but have to find their own way. For many it involved a prolonged period of education and/or increased geographical mobility. The concept of moratorium has been criticised for generalising the life trajectory of middle-class youth. A relatively free and experimental period of life between childhood and adult life was indeed first a privilege of young men from the bourgeoisie, and later to some degree also the young women from the middle classes who got higher education. However, as we have seen earlier, the agrarian family model of north-western European often allowed for a period free of parents' control between childhood and marriage. To call it a moratorium would stretch the concept too far, both because it was a period of hard work, little pay and being under the authority of the new household, and because the young person after this period of work often returned to his or her local community and largely continued the way of life of his or her parents' generation. However, with industrialisation and urbanisation, more young people from rural areas and the working class took up work in the cities as industrial workers, apprentices, office workers or maids. This meant both more formally regulated work hours than working in a rural household had done, and gradually also better pay, which gave a historically new possibility for young people to spend money. Freedom, consumption and leisure became closely intertwined, especially for young working-class girls (Thorsen 1993a, b; Drotner 1999): theirs was a strong urge 'to become modern' (Søland 2000; Ekerwald 2002). While girls from rural areas found themselves more confined by family obligations and middle-class girls of the cities experienced more control by their parents, including demands in relation to education, working-class girls in the big cities who were often outside the reach of their parents' control

got access to free time and a little money of their own (Thorsen 1993a, b). One of our informants in the oldest generation illustrates this. Borghild, born into a rural working-class family in 1911, remembers having a long row with her parents before she was finally allowed to take up a post as a housemaid for a well-off family in Oslo in 1928. The first thing she did when she was out of the sight of her mother was to cut off her braids and get a perm. She received a relatively good salary and this allowed her to buy make-up and fashionable clothes. A series of retouched portraits show her and a girlfriend in Oslo in the late 1920s with wavy hair, fur collars, pearl necklaces and 'diva gazes'. Since she was in the lucky situation that she did not have to send money back home to her family, she could also invest in things for her future, for instance, a full dinner set that cost her half a month's salary. When we interviewed her more than half a century later, the dinner set still sparkled in the vitrine cabinet in her rural home.

To relax, to enjoy yourself, to have fun has constituted the central agenda of the twentieth century's emerging youth cultures. The rising standards of living made an increasing number of young people reach for more than the thrift and toil of their parents' lives, and it also opened up new horizons of individual freedom from family demands and moral obligations. This profound change in moral orientation in modern society was closely intertwined with the rise of mass culture and consumption. In the 1920s and 1930s youthful fun became connected to fashion, music, films, smoking, drinking, dating and romance—all of which required money, material goods and special arenas for young people, and made the older generation panic (Frykmann 1988; Modell 1989; Wennhall 1994; Drotner 1999; Søland 2000; Illouz 2007). Photos of Norwegian high-school classes from the first decade of the twentieth century show young women in long dresses and topknots, whereas in school photos only two decades later, all the female students had short hair and fashionable clothes (Krohg 1996). Modern technologies like radio, phonographs, film and magazines led to the breakthrough of an international youth style in the 1920s. The impact was strongest in the cities, even if young women from our sample who grew up in remote rural areas in Norway also followed the new times closely through radio, touring films and fashion journals. In the 1930s and 1940s youth culture became more separated from the adult world. With the arrival of

jazz, swing and hot, young people started to pursue their own taste in music and ways of dancing, and young female bodies were now exposed in shorts and two-piece bathing suits. The 'swingpjatters' from the early 1940s released a regular moral panic among adults in the Scandinavian countries when they danced to swing, jazz and foxtrot in their shocking outfits (Frykmann 1988; Wennhall 1994). The arrival of the sound film in the early 1930s led to an indulging in film stars and glamour. The romantic melodrama became the grand genre of popular culture of the inter-war period, especially addressing young women. The Danish youth and media researcher Kirsten Drotner (1999) argues that the mixture of moral dilemmas and emotional intensities especially appealed to young women as it could be understood as a symbolic staging of the increasing tension between autonomy and dependency that young women felt culturally and psychologically at this time.

Mediasation, commercialisation and generational protest increased in the youth cultures of the post-war period, represented by the middle generation in our sample. Music and clothes styles for young people were now separated out in marketing and sales (Cook and Kaiser 2004) based on the rapidly increasing levels of consumption. The 'teenager' was conceived by the marketing sector in the US in the 1940s and was used for the first time in print in Norway in 1951. 'Must-have' fashion items and wonders like one's own private transistor radio or battery-operated record player became epidemics in this generation of baby boomers in the 1950s and 1960s. Young people now identified as a special age group through the youth cultural sign systems, including the new youth magazines that became available at this time featuring youth fashion, beauty tips, music and film material. Rock and beat music became the cultural hallmark of this generation. An intense cultivation of music bands, film actors and idols takes over for the romantic melodrama of the inter-war years (Bjurström 1980). The idea that you can change your own personality through a new style is introduced (Johnson 1993). A girl in our middle generation, born in 1948, moved for two years to another city with her family. She still recalls her dream of how she, on her return, would have changed personality to become an outgoing and popular girl in new smart outfits and how this would change her position among her peers. In the late 1960s and 1970s the generational protest assumed more

political forms, including a critical stand towards commercialisation and fashion. Long hair, hippie style and jeans took over from high heels and teased hairdos. None of our informants were directly active in political movements, but those who received higher education remember it as a period where they developed more radical political views and participated in demonstrations.

Around 1990, the youth period of the youngest generation in our sample, fashionable clothes had become brand-label clothing, and the youth style and music had become more differentiated and divided into a plethora of subcultures that signalled not only youth, but also what kind of youth (Bjurström 1997; Lynne 2000). Modern cafés had reached Oslo and were frequented by our middle-class informants, whereas our working-class informants preferred to meet at discos. The VCR and CD player had arrived, and this generation spent much time watching films and TV series together (Drotner 1991). Issues of conformity and uniqueness were at stake in new ways. To follow mainstream fashion or fads uncritically or to not be choosy in music was, at least for middle-class youth, a sign of immaturity (Christensen 1994; Jensen 2001). One of our informants, for instance, said the following about binge drinking parties: '*Okay, fine, but you're over it by the time you get to high school, like [laughs], at least I was … You're supposed to have, to show that you're in control, because that is simply a teenybopper thing.*' Everybody should be in control and 'be themselves', but the ubiquitous commercial youth cultural sign systems seemed to overtake even the most original. Counter cultures like Punk, Goth, Hip Hop and Rave are associated with the 1980s and 1990s (Bjurström 1997), but except for the music, few of our informants identified strongly with these youth cultures. We do not find anything like the generational protest and student revolt of the 1970s in this generation, but many young people, especially young women, became engaged in political activism relating to environment protection, anti-racist work, EU-protest and squatting (Christensen 1994). Compared to our two older generations as young people, the political engagement is actually much more pronounced in our youngest generation.

Of special interest in the context of this book are the ways these youth cultures contributed to changing the meaning of gender and sexuality.

The twentieth century saw huge changes in sexual morals and conduct (Segal 1994; Brumberg 1997; Jamieson 1998). The sexual revolution entailed sexual debuts at a younger age for both women and men, starting in the 1950s, and from 1970 women began having sex at a younger age than men (Pedersen 2005). Sex education for young people was gradually introduced in the second half of the century (de Coninck-Smith 2003) and gay and lesbian rights became a political issue (Plummer 1995; Kristiansen 2008). From the 1980s there was a marked increase in the commercial sexualisation of public space and also easier access to pornography through new media (Sørensen 2002; Knudsen and Sørensen 2006). A focus on HIV/AIDS, rape, sexual violence and harassment is characteristic of the period when we did our interviews (Plummer 1995). Young people, especially young women, are often seen as victims of this increasing sexualisation (Brumberg 1997; Wolf 1997). However, seen from a generational perspective, they have also been agents in the formation of more liberal sexual norms. Whereas adult women in various historical periods have challenged gender structures in work, the economy and politics, young women have rather worked 'through' gender (Nielsen 2004). By gradually changing the norms for how gender, the body and sexuality can be represented, by reframing sexuality and morality in public spaces as well as privately, young women across these three generations have simultaneously carved out spaces for female agency in relation to the body and sexuality. Young men have to a lesser degree been seen as either social agents or loci of changing sexual mores. Ken Corbett (2009) claims that the understanding of men's bodies and desires has not been seen as refigured or reconceptualised like women's bodies and desire have been, but rather have been hampered by traditional Freudian formulations. Corbett finds that men's bodies and desire 'are as disavowed as once women's bodies were' before the advent of feminism (2009: 218). Willy Pedersen (2005) also argues that whereas young women's sexual activities are seen as modern and progressive today, young men's sexual activities are seen as old-fashioned and reactionary, even when women and men engage in the same kind of sexual activities (for instance, watching pornography or purchasing sex toys). Our interviews will illuminate some of the changes that have also taken place in men's bodies and desires, but

when it comes to contextual framing, the available sources offer the story seen from the perspective of the young women.

The shift in normative ideals that the young girls in these three generations identify can be described as a move from the 'nice girl' of the inter-war period to the 'popular girl' of the post-war period and to the 'autonomous girl' by the end of the century (Nielsen 2004; Nielsen and Rudberg 2007). The Danish-American historian Birgitte Søland has in a study of young Danish women in the 1920s (Søland 2000) observed that the concept of 'nice girls' appears exactly at the historical moment in the 1920s when young girls started to go out on their own with their friends, something that made them vulnerable to sexual assaults and bad reputations. Public space in the city was an especially ambiguous territory, a zone of individual freedom without the family bonds that were still intact in the countryside. Søland describes a battle from bastion to bastion with regard to young women's bodies: short dresses, short hair, sleeveless tops, bathing suits and so on—everything modern was associated with being cheap. One critique of the time was that the girls' presence in the public space blurred the lines between respectable and non-respectable women. In this normative vacuum, Søland says, it was felt as necessary to construct a dividing line between 'nice' and 'cheap' girls. By identifying themselves as nice girls, only out to have some fun, the young women could defend their right to be in a public space without losing their reputation. Female friends gained importance both as 'partners in crime' and as providing a space to discuss what the limits should be in relation to behaviour and self-presentation. The changing limits for respectable femininity are also seen in the new ideal of the young woman at this time: the lively and energetic girl with an appealing mixture of sweetness and charm replaced the shy and modest Victorian girl (Thorsen 1997; Telste 2002). The line between nice and cheap girls was indeed sharp and dangerous in the inter-war period. In particular, young working-class women were at risk of being coded as the sexual and deviant 'other' against which nice femininity was defined (see also Skeggs 1997).

The 'nice girl' disappeared during the war. The sight of young girls on their own in public space no longer shocked or provoked; thus, young women had gained more freedom and did not have to legitimise their presence by being nice. The nice girl had by now rather become a boring girl,

but the 'cheap girl' was still around. This presented the young women in this generation with the difficulty of avoiding the stigma as 'cheap', while still having no clear-cut guidelines for what a girl was actually allowed to do. The American sociologist Winnie Breines (1992) writes about the contradiction in the USA in the 1950s and early 1960s between a rising glorification and commercialisation of sex in the public space conveyed by ads, music and movies, and traditional sexual morals with its demand for virginity. Virginity was not so explicitly celebrated as an ideal in the Scandinavian context, but girls could easily be stigmatised as 'cheap' if they were together with more than one boy. Breines describes how the new freedom and individuality of the 1950s and 1960s also implied a new form of exposure for young women. They were more present in the public space and they were evaluated by other young people on the basis of their individual qualities. This is probably one reason why looks, social charms and popularity with the boys were so overwhelmingly important for the young women of this generation, paradoxically enough at a time where they had more opportunities for education than ever before. Being popular and being clever in school often stood in irreconcilable opposition to each other in this generation (Breines 1992; Brumberg 1997). Relationships among girls were extended from being the 'partners in crime' of the oldest generation to including a more brutal rivalry for boys and popularity, as the free market seldom allows for sentimentality. The disappearance of the 'nice girls' in this generation, especially under the influence of the sexual revolution from the late 1960s, the increased knowledge about sexuality and the arrival of the pill,[14] may have encouraged more experimental behaviour in relation to drinking and smoking, as well as more provocative dressing and use of make-up, all causing a heightened level of conflict with parents. But the absence of a clear line between nice girls and cheap girls also meant that sexual morality was on its way to becoming a personal matter and responsibility, not just something to adapt to (Ravesloot et al. 1999).[15] Thus, freedom in the public

[14] The pill came in 1967 but was not generally in use in Norway until the 1970s. Free abortion was implemented in 1978. Thus, the women of our middle generation could not take advantage of these new possibilities before they were married and had had children.

[15] Ravesloot et al. (1999) conclude this from a study of courtship and sexuality of young people in the 1950s and 1990s from the Netherlands, where they find a change from prohibition morality to

space carved out by the inter-war generation under the banner of being nice girls was further elaborated by the post-war generation in a curious blend of increased individualised morality and responsibility on the one hand and a strengthening of the heterosexual script on the other.

If the nice girl had disappeared for the post-war generation, the contour of the 'cheap' girl became blurry towards the end of the twentieth century. Young women were now allowed to experience both desire and ambition as gender-syntonic. Double standards for girls and boys are still at work, but the dominant view is now that it is a purely personal matter when and with whom to have sex—as long as one is cautious about using contraception (McRobbie and Garber 1975; Pedersen 2005). It is now rather the fear of *not* being self-reliant and independent enough that interferes with both friendships and sexual relations. The popular and boy-crazy girl now lingers on the edge of conformity, neither true to herself nor to her female friends. The danger is no longer that of being 'a fallen women', but rather of being 'a fallen subject' (Nielsen and Rudberg 2007). The ideal of the 'autonomous' girl may be finishing off the 'cheap' girl, but in turn produces another anti-type: the weak and dependent girl who cannot stand up for herself. Such girls are no longer seen as 'cheap', but rather as 'exposed', as girls vulnerable to sexual assaults. This discourse has become widespread in social and medical research on youth sexuality, where early sexual experiences have been consistently associated with poor resources and early general behaviour problems, especially among young girls. Thus, the class position of the 'exposed' girl is unchanged compared to the 'cheap' girl in the two oldest generations (see Pedersen et al. (2003) for a review). In all generations we find a specially designed category for young girls who have too much sex or sex in the wrong way, and this category has almost inextricably been connected to working-class girls.

For the middle-class girls in this generation, the gender-related problem is not so much sexuality as their bodies, which have now become the most ultimate expression of the self. The demands of exercise and health as well as the widespread panic regarding 'epidemics of fat' (Bordo 1999:

situational ethics (Ravesloot et al. 1999). In our study we find the same direction of change, but taking place already in the middle generation (the 1960s) (see Chap. 8).

69) had become a dominating cultural discourse when we interviewed the youngest generation as 18-year-olds. According to the North American historian Joan Brumberg (1997), this represents a historical trend in the last century, where society changed focus from inner qualities to outer looks, which in turn were ever-more commercialised and uniformly presented. The body appears to be a central battlefield between new subjectivities and old gender discourses both outside and inside young women today. This tension was exactly the point of frustration that exploded in the Scandinavian countries in around 2000 in a number of debate books by young feminists of the same age as our youngest generation (for instance, Skugge et al. 1999). The young middle-class women behind these books did not have any problems in making their voices heard, getting good marks and good jobs; the problem was that they were still caught in gender stereotypes, especially when it came to the body project. As body and style have become the central points of modern self-construction, the young women seem to be caught in a dilemma: it is deeply offending to girls who see themselves as subjects to be reduced to body and gender. The books by the young feminists circled this topic: their problem was not that they were not pretty enough, but that they still *cared about* being pretty enough. Shame is connected to having failed as a self-contained individual. This context of shifting youth cultures, and especially the cultural meanings surrounding the young female body, is an important context in which to understand the feelings of gender that these three generations have experienced in connection to their own and other bodies in their youth.